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News Release

March 30, 2009

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Los Lunas Plant Material Center Garners National Award

ALBUQUERQUE, NM-The Los Lunas Plant Material Center is being recognized nationally for their role in authoring "A Guide for Planning Riparian Treatments in New Mexico". This guide was the joint venture of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) - which is the Plant Materials Center's parent agency.

The NRCS Plant Materials Program announced the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center was the recipient of its "Notable Achievement Award" on March 16, 2009.

The publication that prompted the award is a user-friendly guide for the restoration of riparian areas in New Mexico, and was the result of the many efforts in the state that were seeking to control invasive species like salt cedar and Russian olive. Following the treatment of areas that had been invaded by such species, there frequently was a need to restore such sites back to natural systems.

"The need for a guide arose that would help consultants, conservation districts, and other conservation conscious parties assess and take appropriate steps to restore these sites that were being treated," said George Chavez, NRCS state resource conservationist. "The Plant Materials Center had been working in this area for years, so it was only natural that they be one of the co-authors of this guide."

The Plant Materials Center is a pioneer in significant technology that is being used in New Mexico to restore riparian areas. They have developed tall-pot, pole-planting, and irrigation technologies that respond to the state's unique riparian areas – with the key being planting techniques that place the plantings in contact with groundwater. This minimizes the need for costly and labor intensive irrigation.

Tall-pots are long tubes that encourage seedlings to grow long root systems that will reach down to the water table when planted. Pole plantings are the poles cut from cottonwood stock that are planted in deeply augered holes so the poles are planted deep enough to come in contact with water. When planted in this manner the poles will sprout roots. Irrigation technology developed by the Plant Materials Center includes use of gels that hold large quantities of water and development of long-stemmed container shrubs that will reach down to the water table.

For copy of "A Guide for Planning Riparian Treatment in New Mexico" go to www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/news/

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